

4AM ritual

For years, Delany has begun most days at four o'clock in the morning with a ritual. First, he spells out the name Dennis, for Dennis Rickett, his life partner. Next, he recites an atheist's prayer, hailing faraway celestial bodies with a litany inspired by the seventeenth-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza: "Natura Naturans, system of systems, system of fields, Kuiper belt, scattered disk, Oort cloud, thank you for dropping me here." Finally, he prepares oatmeal, which he faithfully photographs for the friends and fans who follow him on Facebook. Every so often, when the milk foams, he sees Laniakea—the galactic super-cluster that's home to Earth.

Date: 2024-05-05
Words: 5
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